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PH 655 Postmodernism and Pop Culture

Jerry L. Walls

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PH 655
POSTMODERNISM AND POP CULTURE
FALL 2002

Jerry L. Walls

“Dare we feel superior when we view their tortured expressions in their art? Christians should stop laughing and take such men seriously. Then we shall have the right to speak again to our generation. These men are dying while they live; yet where is our compassion for them? There is nothing more ugly than a Christian orthodoxy without understanding or without compassion.”

- Francis A. Schaeffer

I. COURSE OBJECTIVE

To love God more fully and to become more adequate witnesses to Christian truth by:

1. Exploring pop culture and its postmodern underpinnings, especially with regard to issues of religion, morality and the meaning of life;
2. Preparing students to be insightful critics of pop culture; and
3. Enabling students to use pop culture as a contact point for apologetics and evangelism.

II. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Class attendance is required. Two absences are permitted.
2. All students will be required to read all assigned readings before class and come prepared to make significant contributions to the discussion. “AS IRON SHARPENS IRON, SO ONE MAN SHARPENS ANOTHER?” (Proverbs 27:17)
3. All students will be required to view the movies we will analyze in class, within a week before the class in which it is discussed. NOTE: Some of the movies we will view and discuss contain controversial material that some persons find offensive. This is a matter of individual judgment and if your conscience is uneasy with viewing movies of this sort, you should not take this class (see Romans 14 and I Corinthians 8).
4. Each student will make a class presentation on some aspect of pop culture. These can range from art to music to TV to literature, for a start. They should be both informative and critical. The equivalent of a 5-7 page paper must be turned in. This will constitute 25% of the grade
5. Each student must write a longer (12-15 pp.) critical review or essay on some aspect of pop culture. This will constitute 75% of the grade. This paper is due the last day of class.

NOTE: All papers should have your SPO number in the upper right hand corner.

III. TEXTS

1. Thomas S. Hibbs, *Shows About Nothing*
2. Stuart Sim, ed., *The Routledge Critical Dictionary of Postmodern Thought*
3. William Romanowski, *Eyes Wide Open: Looking For God in Popular Culture*
4. Reading packet.

IV. DAILY ASSIGNMENTS

September 3	Introduction	
5	Sim	vii – 27; 41 – 64
10	Sim “The Numbing of the American Mind” de Zengatita	65-77; 89 – 120
12	Sim Romanowski	121 – 169 155-161
17	Plantinga; “The English Patient Play’s Casablanca” “Casablanca” “The English Patient”	
19	Romanowski Medved Video	11 – 44
24	Romanowski “Crimes and Misemeanors”	45 – 65
26	Romanowski	66 – 89
October 1	Romanowski “Forrest Gump”	90 – 120
3		121 – 154
8	“Theology and Film in Postmodern Culture” “Pulp Fiction”	
10	CLASS PRESENTATIONS	
15	Romanowski “Contact”	162 – 171 3 – 23
17	CLASS PRESENTATIONS	
22	Hibbs “The Matrix”	23 – 53
24	CLASS PRESENTATIONS	

DAILY ASSIGNMENTS (continued)

29	Hibbs “American Beauty”	54 – 75
31	CLASS PRESENTATIONS	
November 5	Hibbs Tight Club”	75 – 100
7	CLASS PRESENTATIONS	
12	Hibbs “Chasing Amy”	101 – 135
14		
19	Hibbs “Chocolat”	136 – 172
21	CLASS PRESENTATIONS	
25 -29	READING WEEK	
December 3	CLASS PRESENTATIONS	
5	Hibbs “The Loss of Metanarrative” “Happiness”	173 – 183